

## Journalists as spies

When Central Intelligence Agency Director Stansfield Turner told a meeting of editors last week that he had approved for intelligence purposes the use of three journalists accredited by U.S. news organizations, several members of the audience expressed outrage. The complaining editors were under the impression that CIA recruiting of journalists was a thing of the past.

They should have known better. Turner told a congressional committee in 1977 that the CIA would not "enter into any relationships" with journalists for intelligence activities, but he reserved the right to make exceptions. Turner made exceptions in the case of the three journalists, though circumstances later prevented actual use of their services.

The Church Committee in 1976 reported fairly extensive use of journalists by the CIA. Professional journalism organizations protested, and Congress seemed well on the way toward outlawing the practice of placing journalists accredited by U.S. news organizations on the CIA payroll. The proposal has since fallen victim to the growing sentiment to unleash the CIA. The main CIA charter proposal before Congress calls for barring CIA agents from using news or-

ganizations for cover purposes, but it would not prohibit the CIA from entering into paid relationships with working journalists.

Turner said he would covertly employ journalists "only under the most extraordinary circumstances." Even if that were so, the knowledge that some correspondents for U.S. news organizations might be working for the CIA would tend to make U.S. journalists suspect generally. The way Turner chided the protesting editors about their concern makes us wonder how rare it would be for the CIA chief to invoke his authority to make exceptions.

American journalists cannot serve two masters. They cannot report objectively about their government and be a spy for that government. Journalists must retain an arms-length relationship with the government and the other institutions they cover if the press is to have credibility.

The disclosure that three journalists are spying for the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and that three were willing to spy for the CIA, shows the need for them and their employers to learn some basic lessons about the ethical responsibilities of the press. The disclosures also underline the need for Congress to force a clear separation between the press and intelligence agencies.